

# Walking Together in Unity

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Unity is very important to God. In order to be in unity with God we must agree with the standards of righteousness and agree to abide by those standards. In Amos 3:3, God poses the rhetorical question,

*“Can two walk together unless they are agreed?”*

The answer is “No”—not in peace and harmony. Jesus exemplified walking with God in unity when He prayed on the Mount of Olives the night before being crucified. He prayed,

*“Father your will, if it is your will, remove this cup from Me, nevertheless not My will but Yours be done”.*

Jesus walked in unity with God. He followed the leadership of God. He walked in perfect unity with God the Father because He subjected His will to the Father’s will. He said when speaking to God in prayer, as recorded in John 17, that He and His Father are one and that we will be one just as they are one.

Most of you can probably quote from Proverbs 6:16-19 that list the six things that God hates, along with the seventh which is an abomination to Him. The abomination is one that sows discord among brethren. Discord is people in disagreement or division of purpose and ideas. God is against division and discord. He is for righteous unity that leads to peace. For this message today, I want to consider that Almighty God expects His people to be unified together with Him in righteousness and that He hates discord in the body of His family. In order for us in the church to learn that lesson, God gave us the example of the relationship with the nation of Israel.

My plan is to start by looking at the process of God’s covenant with Israel from the perspective of how they were a unified people. At the institution of that covenant, all the individuals of Israel were in unanimous agreement with the terms proposed and offered by God. If you’ll turn over to Exodus 19, in the time of Moses God offered the descendants of Jacob, also known as Israel, a covenant based on the premise that if they would obey Him and keep His commandments, they would be His special people.

**Exodus 19:3** *And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: (NKJV)*

I want you to notice that this is a covenant restricted to the house of Jacob—the descendants of Jacob. Continuing in verse 5.

5) *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.*  
6) *And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.*” (NKJV)

The very beginning of God’s agreement with Israel required unity with God by virtue of obedience to His voice and adhering to the terms of His covenant. In verse 7 and 8 of this chapter, describes Moses calling the elders of the people and presenting the terms to them.

7) *So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him.*  
8) *Then all the people ...* (NKJV)

From the context I believe it’s likely the elders who accepted the terms as representatives on behalf of all the people. Later in the story we are going to see how all of the people do accept the terms. That will be a couple of days later. I don’t know for sure if that means the elders or everybody.

8 continued) *... answered together and said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do.” So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.* (NKJV)

Moses returned back to Mount Sinai and reported the people’s affirmative response. God then instructed that the people cleanse themselves that day and the next day to be ready on the third day to meet God. As you know, chapter 20 of Exodus is the record of God speaking the Ten Commandments to the people of Israel. The people were terrified and moved away from the mountain. Turn to Exodus 24. The end of the chapters 20-23 is the record of God’s additional terms of the covenant spoken to Moses. Notice the people’s reaction in chapter 24.

**Exodus 24:3** *So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words which the LORD has said we will do.”* (NKJV)

The people were unanimous, all of them agreed. They were 100% unified. This is my opinion. First the elders verbally affirmed a desire to covenant with God. Then in the hearing of all the people of Israel God verbally presented the Ten Commandments. The people were awe struck with God’s majesty and power and were afraid of Him, so they pleaded with Moses to go by himself to hear God’s words. Then after hearing God he could return and tell them what God had said. As we just read, in verse 3, when Moses returned from hearing God’s instructions and told the people what had been said, they all agreed. Notice they all agreed with one voice. They were unanimous of their acceptance of God’s offer. They were unified in that they all wanted to be in unity with Almighty God. They all wanted to be, metaphorically speaking, to walk together with God because they were in agreement with God’s proposal. Then Moses, for the record, wrote down all the instructions that God had just told him in verse 4.

*4) And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning [I think it's significant we have a new day here], and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. (NKJV)*

It is the next day and they were all in agreement and with one voice to God's offer. I believe that this next day is most likely Pentecost Sunday. I think most of the evidence supports that and is a pretty common opinion. They had all, as God instructed them, bathed and cleansed themselves in preparation to witness God's presence the day before on Mount Sinai. That's the day before, on the Sabbath. In the description here in Exodus 24, we are likely at Pentecost, which is the day after all the people unanimously agreed verbally to God's proposed covenant. Continuing in verse 5.

*5) Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. (NKJV)*

One website I found, called [firmisrael.org](http://firmisrael.org), gave a very brief description of the functions and purposes of the different sacrifices and offerings according to the Old Testament. According to the author, Charlotte Machado, both the burnt offerings and the peace offerings were voluntary offerings. She stated, concerning burnt offerings:

*They were made to express thanks, worship, devotion, and commitment to God. But it was also an atonement for unintentional sin.*

Then she goes on concerning the peace offering. She said:

*This sacrifice expressed thanksgiving but also emphasized fellowship as it was followed by a shared meal.*

Then she also said something which actually caught my attention:

*The vow, thanksgiving, and free will offerings mentioned in the Hebrew scriptures were all peace offerings.*

Clearly both of these sacrifices were appropriate in their veneration and worship towards God and the intended commitment the people of Israel felt toward God. They wanted the unity necessary to walk with God. They wanted God's favor toward them. Peace is achieved through unity, not division. Obedience to God brings unity.

*Continuing in verse 6) ...*

*6) And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar.*

*7) Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient." (NKJV)*

The Book of the Covenant was prepared by Moses to be an official document between God and the 12 tribes. The people of the 12 tribes agreed to do what God had spoken as the terms of their agreement. Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said,

*“Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you, according to all these words.”*

This covenant between God and all the people of Israel was symbolically sealed by the blood of the oxen. A covenant is a solemn agreement which by definition is irrevocable.

I believe it is significant that the sealing of this binding agreement occurred on the second of three annual Feast seasons as described and commanded in Exodus 34:23 and Deuteronomy 16:16. Quoting from Exodus 34:23.

**Exodus 34:23** *Three times in the year all your men shall appear before the Lord, the LORD God of Israel. (NKJV)*

You may recall that the covenant cut between God and Abraham, as recorded in Genesis 15. That covenant was irrevocably sealed and ratified between God and Abraham during the first annual feast season on the same day 430 years before Israel left Egypt. It's all tied together. I think this is important because it gives us a sense of comfort in that there is a significance and reason for His appointed times. The more we bring our thoughts and actions to be congruent to God's, the more we will realize that God is consistent. That covenant 430 years before was memorialized over the 2-day events that happened in Egypt. They were tied together and I gave a message on that a couple of years ago. You can go back and listen to that but I don't remember the title. First by the Passover, which was the redeeming sacrifice on the 14th of Aviv, in Egypt—that was the second day—and the second, the next day on the 15th of Aviv, by God releasing Israel from Egypt. That was the two days they had experienced 50 days earlier from the day this agreement was being ratified. Those events were types of the events of fulfillment in Jesus Christ through His crucifixion on Wednesday and His acceptance by God early Sunday morning was provided for our deliverance from the shackles and slavery of sin. Turn over to Deuteronomy 5. When Israel accepted God's terms, they were not divided. Staying unified requires consistent adherence to basic standards. The basic standards to walk in unity with God are His commandments.

**Deuteronomy 5:32** *“Therefore you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.  
33) You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess. (NKJV)*

As we walk with God, we become closer with God and we build a confidence and a faith and trust in God. Throughout the book of Deuteronomy, Moses exhorts the people not to forget the covenant that was made with God. He's speaking to Israel to obey Him.

Turn over to Psalm 19. There is a joy and a comfort that is derived from living the way of righteousness. That joy and comfort is a fruit of walking in unity with God. Those that as a group, walk with God, have peace and tranquility among themselves. Unity is required for peace. The peace God gives us through obedience to Him results in both personal peace and peace within the body of the church. Psalm 19 describes that peace through the obedience to God.

**Psalm 19:7** *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;*  
8) *The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;* (NKJV)

By studying and doing Gods commandments, we will have a better understanding that will help us as we face challenges that this physical life brings. In addition, we also have to observe and experience life.

9) *The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.*  
10) *More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*  
11) *Moreover, by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward.* (NKJV)

So, we have a warning and reward. When we cherish God and His way and strive to learn from the guidance of God's way, we will grow in wisdom and there will be rewards that we do not generally even know we have received. Let's confirm that in Proverbs 3. Over the years I've realized that several times I have been saved from physical harm and total financial ruin because I recognized some of the snares in life that are warned about in the Bible. Then I was able to avoid those traps.

**Proverbs 3:1** *My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands;*  
2) *For length of days and long life And peace they will add to you.* (NKJV)

God's way is actually unifying and it brings peace. Does that mean everything will always go well? Does it mean we will not suffer horrible loss or even loss of life and devastation? To answer that, let's look at why God chose Israel. Turn to Deuteronomy 4. God has a greater plan than just to have a close relationship with a specific nation or select group. God's overall plan involves all of humanity. He has selected Israel to be an example for the benefit of all humanity and in our day, the church. What Israel does right and what Israel does wrong are all on display so that God can show by example, the fruits of both ways. Here in Deuteronomy 4 God is recounting one of those events that is to be understood as a lesson.

**Deuteronomy 4:3** *Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal Peor; for the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor. (NKJV)*

As you may recall, Baalam had been hired by Balak, the king of the Moabites to figure out a way to bring a curse upon Israel. Baalam even suggested that foreign women should be instructed to entice the Israelite men to commit sexual sin and idolatry against God. As we just read, those that succumbed to the enticement were destroyed. He goes on in verse 4.

*4) But you who held fast to the LORD your God are alive today, every one of you. (NKJV)*

Those that did not indulge in sexual sin and continued to walk in the obedience of God survived. Those who chose to chase after idolatry and sexual sin were destroyed. Moses goes on to explain the reason for their destruction.

*5) "Surely, I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess.*

*6) Therefore, be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' (NKJV)*

The point was for Israel to learn, and all the other nations to learn by the example of what happened to Israel in their walk with God as their special people.

*Continuing in verse 7) ...*

*7) "For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? (NKJV)*

This, to me, is amazing, that the nation of Israel actually had special access to God.

*8) And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day? (NKJV)*

Let's turn over to Deuteronomy 7. God expands on His description on how Israel is special.

**Deuteronomy 7:6** *For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.*

*7) The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples;*

*8) but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (NKJV)*

Turn to Isaiah 57. You can see in the Bible where Israel suffered horrible defeats, oppressions, trials, and the nation was actually eventually torn apart and the Northern tribes were carried into captivity and lost their identity. God's purpose in guiding the world to unity will still prevail.

**Isaiah 57:15** *For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

*16) For I will not contend forever, Nor will I always be angry; For the spirit would fail before Me, And the souls which I have made. (NKJV)*

So being unified with God means that we will not be unified with those that reject God.

*Skipping down to verse 19) ...*

*19) "I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near," Says the LORD, "And I will heal him."*

*20) But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt.*

*21) "There is no peace," Says my God, "for the wicked." (NKJV)*

Turn to Luke 12. Jesus confirmed that peace is not what the wicked can expect. We cannot expect to have unity with the wicked.

**Luke 12:49** *I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! (NKJV)*

*Continuing in verse 51) ...*

*51) Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division.*

*52) For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three.*

*53) Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." (NKJV)*

He is not speaking of dividing the brethren. Rather, he is speaking of dividing those that are willing to follow God and to serve God from those that are not. If you turn to Luke 16, those that are called by God are not called to be divided. We are not to be divided.

*Luke 16:13 No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” (NKJV)*

We need to be walking with God in unity. So even in the church there is constant pressure to reject unity and embrace division. For our safety, we need to study the scriptural and historical examples of Israel. We need to learn the lessons from the scriptures, of obedience and unity toward God versus rebellion and division. We need to reject division and build our faith and trust in God’s way of unity and peace. With God’s help let us all walk together in unity and peace.